TWENTY-FIVE TALKS WITH BOYS AND GIRLS

George H. Morrison, D.D.

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WITH BOYS & GIRLS

BY THE LATE
GEORGE H. MORRISON, D.D.
OF WELLINGTON CHURCH, GLASGOW
Author of
'Floodtide,' 'Sunrise,' 'The Unlighted Lustre,'
'The Ever Open Door,' etc.

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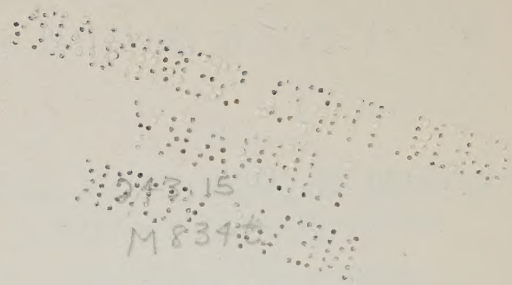

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PREFACE

For many years it had been the earnest desire of the Publishers that Dr Morrison would give to the public some of the addresses delivered to the children of Wellington Church. Only a few months before he passed Home, he agreed to me revising sufficient for a volume, but with his overwhelming burdens refused all responsibility for them, and indeed had only run his eye over a few of them and given his approval, before the call came.

The reader will therefore understand that the addresses are simply transcriptions from rough notes, and that, having been given over a long period, many alterations were necessary before they could appear in print.

They inevitably lack that finished grace that characterised all that came from his

pen, but all who knew and loved the speaker will hear in these talks the lilt of his voice, and recognise the understanding of the heart that so perfectly entered into the child mind.

CHRISTINE M. MORRISON

DULWICH VILLAGE
April 1929

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TWENTY-FIVE TALKS WITH BOYS & GIRLS

I

THE PAVEMENT OF THE SEA

"About the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea."—MARK vi. 48.

Preached on the Sunday following the Titanic Disaster.

I AM sure that all of you are familiar with the circumstances referred to in our text. It is one of the most familiar passages in all the stories of the Gospels.

Our Lord had crossed to the far side of the lake, and there He had fed the thousands of men and women; and then, in the late afternoon, He had sent them to their homes again. When evening fell, and the shadows deepened, He constrained His disciples to get on board a boat, for He longed to be alone with His Heavenly Father in prayer.

You would find it an interesting study,

to gather together and to write down on the blank page of your Bibles the times in which we read that Jesus prayed. Sometimes we read of Jesus praying before work, sometimes we read of Him praying during work. And sometimes we find Him praying when His work is done, at the end of a long and weary day.

Now, probably when the disciples got on board the boat the sea was calm. You know how suddenly a storm can rise upon a highland lake. They had not rowed far before a head-wind began to blow, and it blew harder and harder as the night advanced, until at last, do what they could, they found they were making no headway. Do you think they gave up then? Not a bit of it! They were not the kind of men to give up in a hurry, the men who were to found the Church of Jesus were not the kind of men to give up lightly. So they toiled on, and one o'clock came, and two o'clock, and perhaps the voice of the watchman, crying the hour, was carried to them on the gale. Then in the fourth

watch, we read, sometime between three and six o'clock, Jesus came to them, walking on the sea.

Now, the first thing that strikes me in this story is *the unlooked-for ways in which our Master comes.* Whoever would have dreamed on that wild morning that He would have made a pavement of the sea? When He came to them across the meadows, there was nothing remarkable in that. When He came to them through the crowded city streets, there was nothing remarkable in that; but to come to them across the waters, and to use the waves as if they had been solid ground, there was something there so unexpected that neither John nor Peter ever would forget it. And the strange thing is, that that is what Jesus loves to do.

His ways are not our ways, and often they are unexpected ways. He came to earth not in a gilded chariot, but by the narrow passage of the manger. He came to His crown not through cheering crowds, but through the blood

and suffering of Calvary. And still He comes to us to help us and to save us, often in the last ways we should have looked for—He comes to us, walking across the sea.

Then the next thing I notice here is that *He came to them because He saw.* The Gospel is very careful to inform us the eye of Christ was on them all the time. I suppose when they pushed out from shore they saw the Master for a little time. They saw Him climbing up into the hills, and then amid the rocks they would lose sight of Him, and it may be that they forgot Him, they were so busy toiling at the oars, and perhaps they thought He had forgotten them. "Ah," they might say, "He has gone away to pray, and we cannot expect Him to be thinking about us." They did not know that we never think so deeply about people as when we begin to pray for them. But all the time Jesus was thinking about them. All the time these men were in His heart. I want you to learn this simple

lesson, *that Jesus is always concerned for us.* Sometimes it may be difficult to credit that, and sometimes we may fancy ourselves to be forgotten, but we must hold to it that His eye is always on us, and that His heart is with us when the wind is contrary.

Then the last thing I notice here is that *when He came they did not know Him.* They were sore troubled and afraid, and they cried out, "It is a spirit." You must remember that these men were fishermen, and still filled with the superstitions of fishermen, and they thought that this was the spirit of a storm who had come down from a glen to complete the havoc. It was then that Jesus, seeing their dismay, cried out to them, "It is I, be not afraid," and a great peace fell upon their hearts.

Now, as it was then, so has it often been from that hour to this. Christ comes to us, and somehow our eyes are blinded and we do not know that it is He. Sometimes we call it by the name of chance. Sometimes we call it

accident or disaster. Sometimes we give it the dark name of death. And yet if we only saw as with the eyes of God, and looked at things from the great height of heaven, perhaps we should say that it was Jesus coming, walking upon the sea.

I know a grave far away in Switzerland where two mountaineers lie buried. And on the gravestone there are these words, and these words only, "It is I, be not afraid." These men met their death by an awful accident, and, of course, we cannot but call it by the name of accident, and yet he who wrote these words upon the gravestone saw that there was more in it than that. "It is I, be not afraid."

I have been thinking, during these last days, of these words of our text as I read the dreadful and thrilling narratives of the great disaster. Over and over they came leaping into my mind. I thought of the brave men who had done their duty and were now struggling and sinking in the water.

I thought of them lifting up their hearts in prayer, and then of the last dread cry for help. What shall we call that? Shall we call it accident, shall we call it death? Of course, in one sense it was accident and death. But it may be, that if we saw as God saw, we should say all that our text says of Galilee: "About the fourth watch of the night Jesus came to them, walking upon the sea."

II

A MAN LEFT-HANDED

"When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed."—JUDGES iii. 15.

I WANT to preach you a little sermon this morning upon a very interesting subject, and that is on being *left-handed.* It is quite possible I am speaking to some boys and girls here who are left-handed, and if I am, they might please remember this text in the third chapter of Judges, the fifteenth verse. But before I come to the text there is one thing I want to say, and it is this, I wonder if you boys and girls know what the Scotch is for being left-handed? A friend of mine was lecturing a little time ago in a mining village, and he asked the boys what was another name for a left-handed person, and they said, "Please, sir, carrie paw."

When I was a boy in the Academy here, we used to call it "carrie" or "corrie-fisted." I do not know whether you use that word yet to-day or not. But, you see, that word is not slang, it is a great deal better than slang, it is Gaelic. The Gaelic for left is *carr*, and that is the meaning of the proper name, Mr Carr. Anybody called Carr comes originally from somebody who was left-handed; and if you go into a Scotch village to-day, and ask an old man sitting by the wayside, "Can you direct me to Mr Kerr?" he will say at once, "Oh, it's Mr Carr you want," and there is the old pronunciation, and it meant a man who is left-handed. I just mention that because it is very interesting.

Now, I want you to look at the man who is mentioned here, "Ehud, son of Gera, a man left-handed." I think he teaches us three things.

First of all, I think he teaches us *that God does not trouble about luck.* I do not think in God's mind, if I may speak with reverence, there is any such

thing as what you and I call *luck*, and I do not want any boy to grow up with the impression that he is unlucky; if he does that, he may just as well give up. What I mean is this, all down the ages, and in almost every country, the left hand is the unlucky hand. You see that in language for instance, and language so often gives away the secret.

There is a word that we grown-ups sometimes use, and the word is "sinister"; we sometimes say of a man that he has got a sinister kind of face, and we do not like that man; we really mean he has got a bad face, and sinister is just the Latin word for left. If a man is the sort of man you like and trust, you never dream of saying, "Oh, he is all left." You say, "Oh, he is all right."

I suppose our Blessed Lord was thinking of that in His great parable, wanting to make the Jews understand things, when He said all the sheep were to be on His right hand, and all the goats were to be on His left hand.

Let us try reverently to imagine, supposing God had come down and said to these Israelites, "Now, I want to choose somebody to be your deliverer, and there is that splendid man Ehud; what do you say to choosing him?" I imagine all the Israelites would at once have said, "Lord, you must not choose him, that would be unlucky." And then God chose him, and I think it just means that God does not trouble about luck. In this wonderful world of His there is no such thing at all. As Wordsworth says, "His everlasting purposes embrace all accidents, converting them to good," or, as President Garfield used to say, "A pound of pluck is worth a ton of luck."

Another thing this text teaches us is *that you can do very good work in spite of your defects.* After all, it is not a very great defect to be left-handed. Of course, it does make life a little more difficult, because everything in this world is arranged for right-handed people. You go into a carpenter's shop and you

will find that the tools on the bench, screws, anything that is capable of two forms, are all arranged for right-handed people.

You go to play a game of golf, and your friend says to you, "I will lend you clubs." You know, if you are left-handed, you cannot use his clubs, you have got to have them specially made. These little defects make life just a little bit more difficult, and I think our text teaches us that if you have got some little defect like that, if you are left-handed, if one leg is a little shorter than the other, if you stammer, if you are not just as strong as your mother would like you to be, in spite of these defects you can do great work in the world. God took this man and made him a deliverer, and gave peace to Israel through him for eighty years.

Yes, children, but there is one other thing I would like to say to you, and it is this, *the things you are a little apt to despise may yet be very beautiful.* You don't really despise left-handed people,

but no boy likes his chums to shout at him, "Corrie fister." And yet a thing that is a little apt to be despised may be very beautiful.

When a bride and bridegroom stand before the minister to get married, the bride stands on the bridegroom's left. Long ago, when everything was very wild, a man never knew at what moment somebody would come along with a club and want to smite him; and so, while his left arm supported the woman, his right was free to fight for her. My dear boys and girls, to support anyone a little weaker than you is very beautiful, isn't it?

There is one magazine that I always read, I would not miss it for a great deal, and that is the magazine of the London City Mission, telling how men go down to the dark places of London preaching Christ. It is a wonderful story. If we had not a City Mission of our own I would have had one of these men preaching here long ago. Well, only in the last number I read this.

One of the City Missionaries was

passing through a London park (you can shut your eyes and think how beautiful the London parks must be to-day),[1] when he was met by an Ex-Cabinet Minister who knew him, and who said, "Can you tell me what is the most beautiful thing in the world?" and when the Missionary couldn't, the Ex-Cabinet Minister said, "I think it is a mother's left hand." He said he had looked round that park, and there were hundreds of mothers, almost every one of them with her left hand holding a little child, teaching it to walk, guiding and supporting it, and he thought the most beautiful thing in the world was a mother's left hand.

Our Blessed Saviour just came to teach us that many things we despised a little: sparrows, common weeds and human weeds, prodigal sons, things that were a little despised by the elder brother at home, and in the Church, these things in God's sight might be very beautiful indeed.

[1] Preached in June.

Now, do you think you can remember what the three lessons are I have taken from this old deliverer, a man left-handed, the Sir William Wallace of Israel ?

First, I think he teaches us that if we are God's children we must not talk about having luck nor that we have no luck, the ordering of God's providence runs far deeper than that ; secondly, I want you when you go home to show your mothers that you remember what I said, and that you can do good work in spite of your slight defects ; and, thirdly, things that we are apt to despise may, by God's love and grace, be very beautiful and become a blessing to others.

III

THE BURNING OF THE CLAVIE

OR

HELPING THE SUN TO SHINE

"Let your light shine before men."—MATT. v. 16.

IN one of the little towns that are scattered along the Moray Firth they have got a curious custom which they observe every year in the darkest time of the winter. It is called "The Burning of the Clavie." I dare say you never knew there was such a word as *clavie*, but keep it in mind, it may come in handy in one of your cross-word puzzles.

I have never seen the burning of the clavie, but I understand it is something like this. Young fishermen, in the darkest and deadest time of winter, get a long pole, and at the end of it they stick a barrel or a pail of tar, and that

is set on fire, and then they go in procession through the streets, and after it is all over they have a bonfire. Now, if you were to ask these young fishermen what they were doing, of course they couldn't explain to you.

We are constantly doing a great many things in sport and otherwise, and we have lost the meaning of them long ago. When you see a cat or a dog, for instance, turning round and round and round before it goes to sleep on your carpet, that just means that thousands of years ago the cat had to make its nest in the leaves, and had to burrow a hole, and it still does it, though it is sleeping on your carpet. Just in the same way you and I in the summer go for a picnic. I wonder why we all love picnicking? It is just because a thousand years ago we had no houses, but were all living in the open air.

And in the same way with the burning of the clavie; these young fishermen may think it is just a bit of sport, but if you ask men who have studied these

things, men who have gone deeply into these things, they will tell you a very curious thing. They will tell you that, long ago, people used to think the sun was living, and, of course, in the dead of winter the sun is so rarely shining, and that meant that the sun was ill and weak, and people thought if they lit fires, and burned tar barrels, it would encourage the sun to shine, it would help the sun to take heart again and shine; and that is why they burned the clavie long ago.

You know, I think it is a beautiful ambition for anybody to have, and especially boys and girls, *just to do everything they can to help the sun to shine.* Of course I don't mean the sun that is shining on us this very moment. For instance, suppose you meet somebody in the street who has been ill. Suppose you meet them with a long face, and tell them how ill they are looking; suppose you tell them you had a cousin who had just the very same symptoms they have, and your cousin

died! Well now, you know, that is not helping people to keep the sun shining. It makes things more difficult. But if you tell them they are looking wonderfully well, that the spring is coming, and that in a week or two we are going to have the coltsfoot out, and that the time of the singing of the birds will come, why, you help the sun to shine for them. I wish everybody would just try that.

Or again, you take your school. There comes a boy or girl to school, new, shy, timid, very unhappy; perhaps a delicate boy who cannot join in your games. Suppose, instead of bullying that boy you were decent to him; suppose you showed him a little kindness; suppose you took his part when other boys were ragging him, it is wonderful how you would help the sun to shine for him. Whenever you do that, you are doing a great deal.

Or again, take the home. There are some days when your father is very worried with business, and your mother

is not well, perhaps she has a bad headache; don't you know many ways in which you can help the sun to shine, by being quiet and obedient, and doing little, kind, thoughtful deeds unasked. I knew a minister who lost his wife; it was a little country church, and he used to talk freely to his people, telling them how very lonely he was when he had nothing but her photograph. And one day, when he came home, his little girl said to him, "Father, I am going to be better than a photograph, I am going to try to be as good to you as Mother." It was quite wonderful the difference his little daughter's thoughtfulness made, how the sun began to shine for him.

And don't you see, boys and girls, you can help the sun to shine by carrying a light about, not by speaking, *but by carrying a light about*; and don't you remember Somebody Who says, "I am the Light," and you know it is a wonderful thing—I have seen it so often—that if you go about carrying that light, hand

in hand with Him Who says, "I am the Light," it is wonderful how constantly you can help the sun to shine for other people. I want you all to try that; it is very well worth trying, and if you kneel every morning and ask Jesus to show you how to shine for Him during the day, you will become "Lights set on a hill that cannot be hid."

IV

THE ELECTRIC SPARK

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—PHIL. iv. 13.

I AM not going to preach to you this morning, but I am going to tell you a little incident, and if I have got to bring myself into it you will just have to excuse me, because this incident happened to me, and it happened so long ago that many of your fathers and mothers were not born then, to say nothing of you, and I am going to tell you how it came back to my mind.

A week ago yesterday we had a luncheon in Glasgow to a gentleman who has done a great deal for education, and whose name is Charles Cleland. I had to make a little presentation at that luncheon, simply because I happened to be his oldest friend. We did

not begin college together, because I don't think he ever was at college, but, as little fellows, we went to school together in the second English class of the Glasgow Academy. (I wonder if there is any boy here this morning in the second English at Glasgow Academy ?) Well, his father had a beautiful house out at Maryhill, and sometimes on a fine Saturday I used to spend the day there, and one day we went down to see his father's paper mill which stood on the banks of the Kelvin, at Dawesholm ; that is to say, on the road that leads through Kelvindale now and across the canal ; and one day in the mill I saw something I have never forgotten.

I don't know if you have ever seen over a paper mill, but if you have not you ought to try to see one, because it is extraordinarily interesting. Well, here was a great steel roller, and on it was being wound great sheets of paper. It was either cartridge paper, or blotting paper, and as you will all understand,

there was a great deal of electricity generated by the friction, and on the wall near the roller there was a gas bracket.

There was no electric light in those days, just as there were no motor cars, but here on the wall was a gas bracket with no globe on it (they did not put globes on brackets in mills), and then the workman who was attending to the roller, and whom I remember as a fine type of Scottish workman, first of all turned on the gas—did not light it but just turned it on, and it came hissing from the burner—and then he put one hand, one knuckle on the roller, and held up his other hand to where the gas was hissing, and to my intense astonishment, with that knuckle he lit the gas. I have never forgotten that all these years. Don't you see, if his hand had been in his pocket, or if his hand had been on my head, he never could have lit the gas, but then, his one hand was on the roller, and though he did not feel anything except a little

prickling, tides of electricity were pouring through his body, and with the other knuckle he lit the gas. He had no match, he had no taper.

I never forgot that, and although perhaps you will understand it better when you get a little older, there are hundreds of people in Glasgow who could tell you that that is exactly what happens when you keep in touch with God. Things you could never do of yourself, lights you could never kindle of yourself, somehow you can accomplish, if with the one hand you are touching the roller, if with your heart you are keeping in touch with God. Hundreds of people could tell you, and many ministers could tell you that they have been perfectly conscious of that many, many times. Whenever people tell me that, whenever somebody comes back from Keswick Convention and tells me that, well, I never disbelieve it, for I think of my old friend with one hand on the roller who, with the other hand, lit the gas.

I will only say this much more, I want you to bear this in mind when you hear about Bible miracles. I have never the least difficulty with some Bible miracles when I remember that incident of my early boyhood. Now, you take that day told us in the Book of Acts, when Peter and John went up to the Temple, and there, lying in the Gate Beautiful, was a poor man who had been lame since he was born. Now what happened? Well, Peter had nothing of his own, Peter had not a match; Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but," he said, "in the name of Jesus, get up and walk." And then he took him by the hand, and the man leapt on his feet and began walking and leaping to the Temple, a thing he had never done since he was born.

Now, I used to wonder about that, but I never wondered since I saw the workman. You think, Peter's one hand was on the man, but Peter's other hand was gripping Christ's, and just as the tides of power flowed through the work-

man and he lit the gas, so the light and power of Jesus, that Peter was touching, flowed through him, and he lit up that man's life with a joy and power he had never known before. Whenever you are tempted to disbelieve a miracle like that just remember, will you, what I saw long ago, when a man whose old hand had no more power than mine had, was able to kindle a flame because his other hand was touching the roller.

V

BIBLE SHOES

"How beautiful are thy feet with shoes."—Song of Solomon vii. 1.

I wish to preach to you this morning a little sermon about shoes, and it seems to me a delightful thing that we should find shoes so often mentioned in the Bible. It is one of the tokens that make me feel that the Hand which gave us Nature is the Hand which gave us Scripture. In Nature you have many vast things, like Mount Everest and the great Continent of Africa and the vast Pacific Ocean. But then also, you have room in it for tiny, common things, like the ant and the daisy and the dandelion. In the same way you have in Scripture mighty things, like the Love of God and the Cross of Calvary, but there is also room in it

for little, trifling, common things, like shoes.

The first lesson from the shoes of Scripture is that God wants us to be ready. To find that, you must get on to the magic carpet and fly back with me to the grand old Book of Exodus. There we read, that on the night when Israel was leaving Egypt God ordered that there should be a feast, and the singular thing is the people were to eat that feast with their shoes on. When you go to a party you put off your shoes, and put on your slippers—sometimes very pretty slippers. But the Israelites had to eat with their shoes on, which just means that God wished them to be ready. That is what He wants us all to be, ready to help, ready to resist, ready to do and bear His holy will.

What would you think of the crew of a lifeboat if they were not ready when the call came, and, if we are followers of the Lord, we are all members of a lifeboat's crew. Some people try

to sail through life in a pleasure-boat, but long before the end they get dead sick of it. The only way to enjoy life is to sail through it in a lifeboat. There was a King in England long ago who was called Ethelbert the Unready. I wonder if there is any John the Unready here this morning, or any Mary the Unready! How different it was with little Samuel who, when God spoke to him in the darkness, said, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

The next lesson we learn from Bible shoes is, that there are some things we must leave outside. Once again, to see how true that is, we have to turn to Exodus. You will recall the story of the Burning Bush, and how Moses went up to see the wonder of it. Then there came a Voice out of the Bush, "Put off the shoes from off thy feet." You see, Moses had been walking all the morning looking after his sheep, and no doubt his shoes had carried him over marshy ground, and what God meant was, "If you want to draw near

to Me you must leave outside all that is soiled and dirty." That is what God is always saying to young people. When you go to your games, when you go to bed at night, when you go a walk, or come to Church, you must leave outside all that is soiled and dirty. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see Him.

The third lesson from the shoes of Scripture is that God will give us everything we need. Let us think now of the story of the Prodigal. When he came home again his father gave him a ring. Now of course the Prodigal did not need a ring. He could have been perfectly happy without a ring. He got the ring because his father loved him, and love likes to give to the very uttermost. But he not only got a ring, he got shoes as well, and he got them because they were the very thing he needed after his long tramp from the far country. And so shoes tell us that, if we only trust our Father, we shall not only get many

wonderful tokens of His love, but we shall also get exactly what we need. What a difference it makes when we quietly believe that He will supply all our wants. Perhaps that is the deepest meaning of our text, "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes." It speaks of the beauty of a life that puts its trust in God, and finds that all necessary things are given.

VI

THE OLIVE TREE

"They said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us."
—JUDGES ix. 8.

I AM afraid that you will have some little difficulty in seeing this tiny object which I have in my hand this morning, but this is really the twig of an olive tree, with two small, immature olives on it. And the deep interest of this twig is this, that it was plucked from a tree just beside the Garden of Gethsemane, brought home to me by a friend, and here it is this morning.

I wonder if any of you ever saw an olive tree? They are not uncommon in the English gardens, and many years ago, before any of you were born, there was a wild olive tree growing on the banks of the Clyde just above Carmyle, and the Bridgeton weavers, who were

great botanists, used to go out and watch it, and some of them could not make out in the world what it was; but, of course, it was not really wild. Like many of you, the olive tree is very fond of warmth. It does not like our cold climate.

If you want to see them growing in great groves you have got to go to the south of France, to Italy, to Spain, or to Africa or Palestine, or one of the warmer countries of the East. It is not a stately tree like the horse-chestnut, or beautiful like the beech, but once you have seen it you never can forget it, because there is a kind of misty sheen about it. It is just like a bride when she has got a veil on. And the flowers of it are little white flowers. Whenever they have done their work they drop off like a flake of snow, and that is why Job, in the fifteenth chapter, when he is talking about wicked people, says, "They cast their flower like the olive tree."

You see, the writers of the grand

old Book did not go through life blind. They all had their eyes opened by God to the wonderful, beautiful things of Nature. The fact is, you will never understand the Bible unless you are the same, and have eyes to see its lessons repeated and explained in the world of Nature.

But to me the deeply interesting thing about the olive tree is this, that it is mentioned so often in the Bible. I have not looked up any Concordance, but I fancy I am right in saying it is mentioned oftener than any other tree.

If I were to say to you, "What is the first tree mentioned in the Bible?" (I mean of the kind of trees we have still), the answer is, the olive. Don't you remember, in the eighth chapter of Genesis, where we have the story of the Flood, the little dove came back after seven days, and this is what was in its mouth—the twig of an olive tree. And that is why, to this hour, the olive tree is the sign of peace. Then you have got the story in the Book of Judges; and remember how often the

Psalmist talks about olive trees. It is from the Psalmist probably that we have come to call our children "olive branches." And then, after all the other books, you come to Jesus, and you find Jesus in His agony amid the olive trees.

But that is not everything, for whenever in the Bible you read about anointing, that always means anointing with olive oil. And that is why, whenever you think about the olive tree you think about the Holy Spirit, because just as kings and priests were all anointed with the olive oil, so when you and I trust in Jesus we are all anointed with the Holy Spirit.

But there is another honour done to the olive tree, and that is, it is a sort of parable of Jesus. Indeed, one of the names of Jesus we would never have had except for the olive tree. Now, what do you call Jesus? You call Him Jesus Christ. Do you know what Christ means? Christ means "anointed." And in the Hebrew the word for "anointed" is "Messiah," so, whenever you call

Jesus "Christ" or "Messiah" your thought should go back to the olive tree, for it was always with olive oil that anybody was anointed.

I think it was very like God to bring the olive into connection with our Blessed Saviour, because when you read the Bible you find the olive was used for three things. Firstly, it gave light—oil. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, five of them took lamps, but they did not take any oil, and that was olive oil. Because they had no oil they had no lights, and our Blessed Saviour says, "I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness."

Then the olive tree was used for food. Nowadays we have the fruit as a dainty. I must say I don't like them; I daresay some of you do, people have strange tastes; but in the East olives were an article of everyday food. When Solomon wanted to pay the hire of workmen for cutting down the wood for the Temple, don't you remember he sent great baskets of olives; they

were used for food. Is not our Blessed Lord the Food of the world?

And then, lastly, olive trees were used for medicine. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, when he found that poor man battered by the roadside, you remember he poured oil into his wounds; that is olive oil. The wonder about Jesus is that He is not only a doctor, He is the medicine also. I remember a dear woman saying to a doctor, "Doctor, no doubt your medicine is very good, but the best medicine's yourself; you do me good every time I see your face." And, in beautiful deep meanings, that is true of our Great Physician. The Great Physician is the medicine.

When I remember how the olive trees gave light, when I think how men used it for their daily food, when I remember the wonderful medicine it was (and I consider it is so still), you know, I think it is just another instance of God's wisdom and thought to have made the olive tree, that it might be another parable of the Lord Jesus.

VII

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."—MALACHI iv. 2.

THERE is more than one text in Scripture where God is called a Sun, and when you get home I shall be glad if you will look up these texts in Scripture where God is called a Sun. I am sure that every one of you was interested in the eclipse of the sun which we had yesterday. It was not a very good afternoon, and perhaps we did not see it very clearly, perhaps the darkness was not just as great as some of us had expected, but I am sure that every one of you was told about it, and a good many of you saw the eclipse.

Now, I am going to give you three truths that I think you might gather from that eclipse, and I want you to remember them.

In the first place, don't you think it is beautiful that *the more we know of God the less afraid of Him we are?* I do not know if they saw the eclipse yesterday in the heart of Africa, but if they did I am sure many natives would just be terrified. You know they are terrified in China. They think it is a great dragon that is going to swallow up the sun, and they beat gongs in order to frighten the dragon away. I did not notice anybody yesterday even a little frightened. We had our primary children's party here, none of the children seemed the least afraid, neither were the people that you met on the street. You know that is just because we know more of God, and of God's ways. And don't you think it is beautiful that the more you know of God, the more you learn of God's ways, the more you learn to trust Him and to know that all is well? You see that is just what Jesus did.

Suppose you asked a missionary what kind of religion people have in Living-

stonia. Perhaps you and I used to think of the savage as happy, sitting under the palm tree, but you know the missionary would tell you that their religion is just fear, they don't know God, and they are terrified of everything. And then, don't you see, the Lord comes and says, "I want you to know God better, I want to tell you that He is a Father, and that He loves you, and that He will never leave you." And you and I are not terrified of God now, just because we know Him better, and I think that is a beautiful thought.

There is another thing, and it is this, *how a little thing can blot out a great big thing.* Now I am not going to give you measurements, because I am quite sure I could not remember them, and I daresay you could not either, but you all know perfectly well that, compared to the sun, the moon is just a tiny little thing, and yet yesterday that tiny little thing just blotted out the whole sun, because it was so near us. You know, I think that is often happening.

A few years ago I was in Devonshire, and one beautiful afternoon I was sitting on the grass amid lovely country, looking out over the Bristol Channel, and on the other side of the hedge there passed two ladies, and one was saying, "Oh, dear! this nail in my shoe." She said nothing else. Only a tiny, little, almost invisible nail, but it blotted out all the country, blotted out the Bristol Channel. She could not see anything because of the pain. That is what little sins do, and that is what an angry little word does, blots out the peace of the home, perhaps for the whole day. I want you to learn how a little thing can blot out a great big thing.

And then there is just this one thing more. I want you to remember *how a thing that happened far away can yet influence us in our daily life.* I really don't know how far away the sun is, but I know it is a very long, long, long distance; and yet something happened there yesterday, and at our little party we had to turn on the electric light.

Our little party, football games, and things like that, were all affected by the darkness caused by what was happening miles, and miles, and miles away.

It is just like that with Somebody who was born two thousand years ago, and lived thousands and thousands of miles away. He was born and lived and died there, and to-day, if it had not been for Him, we would not be in Church, if it had not been for Him we would not have a Sunday. Every time you open your newspaper you are reminded of when He came; you cannot date your letter without going back to Him. All this happening so far away, and so long ago, and yet influencing our lives to this hour!

You know I thought of these things during the eclipse yesterday. First, that the more we know of God the less we are afraid of Him. Secondly, how a little thing can blot out the great big sun. And thirdly, how something may happen far, far away, and long ago, and yet affect all the daily happenings of our lives to-day.

VIII

THE HOLLY

A CHRISTMAS ADDRESS

I SUPPOSE there is scarcely a house in Scotland but has its decorations at this season. Many of you have been busy lately in hanging up the greenery in your homes. Sometimes these decorations are splendid and elaborate, and sometimes they are quite poor and mean, but there are few houses in our country where something of the kind is not seen to-day. Now you know the meaning of these decorations ?

If our King were to come to Glasgow, you know how we would decorate the streets and hang festoons in front of all our buildings. And so, at Christmas time, Christ comes ; He is our King, and it is because we honour Him and love Him that we want our houses to be decorated too.

Now there are certain plants which we use for decoration, and each of them, if you knew it, has its own history. Think, for example, of the mistletoe. Do you know why the mistletoe is used? Well, the mistletoe, when our land was heathen, was a sacred plant, and when the missionaries came preaching the Cross of Christ they said, "We will take this sacred mistletoe, and lay it at the feet of Christ," and so, in His name, it has been honoured ever since.

Then again, there is the laurel. When I was a boy at school the prizes that we used to get were beautifully bound, and on the binding there was a certain Latin inscription, which few of us could read. Above the inscription there was a laurel wreath, that meant that the boy who got the prize was victor, for among the ancient Greeks and Romans, as I am sure many of you know, the wreath of laurel was the conqueror's crown, and so very naturally the laurel came to be associated with the Kingdom and the Victory of Christ; for never

forget, spite of all our sin and failure, that we are more than conquerors in Him.

But of all the plants associated with Christmas none is so beloved as the holly. If any of you have been sent out to buy the decorations, I am sure your mother has said to you, "Now, whatever you forget, don't forget to bring us back some holly." Why, then, think you, has it such a foremost place? Why is all this honour paid to it at Christmas?

I think it was because, to our forefathers, the holly spoke in no uncertain way of Christ. You know our forefathers were not learned men. A great many of them could not read, but when they saw the holly at the Christmas season they would think about it and meditate upon it, until at last it began to speak to them of the Babe who was born in Bethlehem, perhaps in some such way as follows:

In the first place, the holly speaks of Jesus because it is always *the same*. I have been, as you know, in the country

for the past few months in one of the most beautiful parts of Perthshire, and when I went there the leaves were all on the trees and the woods were beautiful and green; but by and by the leaves began to fall, and lay on the roads, glowing like living fire, and then came a day of rain and tempest, and they lost their glory and were dimmed. But all the time there was one tree that shone out green, and never changed, and that tree was the holly.

It is the same in February, when the snowdrops come; it is the same in April when the ground is yellow with celandines; it is the same in July when the roses blossom; and in December, when the whole earth seems dead. When men thought on that—and, though they could not read, our forefathers perhaps thought a good deal more than we do—it spoke to them of One Who was unchangeable, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Again, I think the holly spoke of Jesus just because it is so *prickly and*

spinous. Now, if this were a place for talking about botany, I could give you a long address upon thorns and spines. I could tell you how they arise, what purpose they serve, and how high up on plants they disappear.

I could direct you to a beautiful poem by the poet Southey on the Holly, which takes notice of that very fact. But to-day I cannot dwell on that. All I say is, that the holly is prickly and thorny, and that when men looked at it and saw these thorns, it recalled to them the earthly lot of Jesus Christ.

Many of you are very happy boys and girls, many of you have a very happy lot, you are so taken up with the prospect of your presents that you have hardly patience to listen to me this morning, but always remember that the lot of Jesus was one of grief and pain and sorrow, and that out of that sorrow we are made rich and strong.

There is a legend of the Roses of Subiaco, which is told by Dr Hugh M'Millan in one of his books. The great

St Benedict lived at Subiaco, which is a quaint and romantic town in Italy, and there he had a little garden filled with thorns, and upon these thorns he was wont to fling himself when he was sorely tempted of the devil. Then, some eight hundred years afterwards, there came to Subiaco St Francis, one of the sweetest and most saintly men whom God has ever given to the world, and when St Francis saw the thorns, and when he remembered how they had blessed the world, he prayed over them, and they were changed to roses, and, says the legend, the roses without any thorns are blooming in the monastery garden until this day.

There is something in that which speaks of our Saviour; through His love and intercession how many a thorn for us has changed into a rose! As the years pass, more and more, boys and girls, you will come to understand the depth and truth of that.

And then, lastly, I think the holly spoke of Jesus by its blood-red berries.

The berries of the mistletoe are white. The berries of the ivy—I wonder which of you could tell me what colour the berries of the ivy are? But all of you know how the berries of the holly are blood-red, and I am sure that, as in the dead of winter men looked at them shining blood-red long ago, and perhaps as they looked, heard the Church bell summoning to worship, their thoughts went to that hour in Palestine when the blood of Jesus was shed upon the Cross.

Now, to-day we are of course commemorating the birth of Christ, but I want you to remember that that life which began in the manger of the inn ended for our salvation upon the bitter Cross, and I want you to remember that these little hands, which were stretched out entreatingly to His mother, were at last nailed by Roman soldiers to the Cross. It has taken that *death* as well as that *birth* to give us what we call our happy Christmas, and that yours may be, in the best sense, a happy Christmas, is my sincere prayer for you to-day.

IX

"UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD"

A FLOWER SERVICE

"Unspotted from the world."—JAMES i. 27.

As I look round this hall to-day the lovely flowers and your bright faces bring to mind this text, "Keep yourselves unspotted from the world." Look how unspotted this flower is, how unspotted that one is—and you also, in your nice clean clothes. You all know, boys and girls, big ones and little ones, what spots are. You know how they come on your collar, or on your dress, but the Bible is thinking, not of spots upon our clothes, but upon our hearts, and this is what it says to us, "Keep yourselves unspotted from the world."

Why do you think we ought to do

that? First, *because there is a Friend in the house.* Is not that a strange reason? Now listen. Some of you are playing outside and you get dirty, and then your mother calls to you to come in because your aunt or your uncle has come. Does your mother let you go in all dirty and spotted? No, she gives you a clean collar, or a clean dress, *because there are friends in the house.* You know that each of your bodies is a house. In this house of the body there dwells a Friend, Whose name is God. And just because in our hearts and in our bodies there is "a Friend in the house," God says to us, "Keep yourselves unspotted from the world."

Second, we have to try to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" *because we are not our own.* You know, if a thing is your very own you can do with it what you like—and yet not always. If it is a dog or a cat you cannot do with it what you like; you cannot torture it or be unkind to it. If it is a Bible you cannot do with it

what you like; you dare not tear its pages or abuse it. But all the same, if a thing is your own you can do a great deal with it. You can paint the pictures in a book, you can write your name in it. But if a book belongs to your teacher or to the library, ah! what care you take of it. You have got to keep it unspotted because it is not your own. And remember, dear boys and girls, the Bible says to us that we are not our own. We are "bought with a price."

Third, we have got to keep ourselves unspotted *because we are working for a prize.* Some of you get prizes in school, some of you do not. When I was in school we used to get prizes, and sometimes in the writing class the teacher would come round and say, "If you don't do better you will never have a chance of the prize." And so we would start again, and, with all our care, we tried to write without spots, because we wanted to get a prize. Now let there be no mistake. We are all working

to get a prize. The Apostle says we are working for the "prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus." Just because we are doing that we must do everything in our power to keep our copybook "unspotted from the world."

And, lastly, I will tell you something more. When we do get spotted, when sin comes, what are we to do? Some of you have had fever, and you know how ill you were, and how the spots came on your chest. And what did your parents do? They sent for the doctor, and he sent you at once to hospital, where you were cared for and nursed till you were quite better. You know who The Great Healer is? You know He is Jesus, and whenever you have got spotted by sin, remember there are none of you too young just to pray to this Doctor, and ask Him to keep you and make you clean. He does it so very willingly.

Not only that, but He does it all for nothing—all He asks in return is your love. Just as your parents give you

everything when you are little, and never dream of sending in their account, so much more does God give us everything for nothing. "Justified freely by His Grace." It is His great love that gave you these flowers to-day for which you paid nothing, and that gave us all we have, because Christ loved, and Christ died.

Shall we then, in return for all His mercies, and to show we do love our Saviour, try to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world"?

X

LOVE'S REWARD

I ONCE heard a very eminent citizen of Glasgow giving an address down in our Mission District. The address he gave to our mothers was one of the most perfect I have ever listened to, and this is what it was. It was about a cup of tea, and that, of course, was a text that exactly suited the mothers, and the point he tried to bring home to them was this, *What is the most important thing in a cup of tea?*

The speaker argued it out in this way. He said, "Well, it can't be the sugar, because some of you don't take sugar, and it can't be milk, for some of you don't take milk, and if I gave you a little dry tea you could not make anything of that; but," he said, "the most important thing in a cup of tea is the

water, and the water is the one thing you get for *nothing*."

And then he gave the mothers a very beautiful address on all the things God gives us for nothing: the sunshine of this morning, the lark that was singing last night for joy (you paid nothing, although it is quite as beautiful as Tetrazzini), the flowers that are coming up, and that greatest gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ—all of them given us of grace, that is to say, gratis, for nothing.

And that leads me on to another story which appeared in one of our Scottish magazines some years ago, and which, somehow, I have also never forgotten. (It is a great thing not to forget.) It was a story of a boy in the country who lived with his mother, and she was a widow; and, being a very decent little fellow, he did a great deal to help his mother, used to fetch the coals and carry wood and go messages, and so on. And then, being observant, he began to notice that when other people did things

for his mother, they sent in their bills and got paid.

If, when the hired man chopped the wood, when the plumber came, when the carpenter mended the window-sash, they all sent in their bills and got paid, why, he began to think, shouldn't he send in his bill and get paid? Well, he did, and his bill was like this :—

MOTHER OWES NORMAN

For bringing in coals three times	£0	0	6
For fetching wood many times	0	0	6
For going two messages . .	0	0	4
For being a good boy . .	0	0	2
Total .	£0	1	6

He laid it on his mother's plate in the morning when she came down to breakfast. His mother was a very wise woman; she did not even smile. Sometimes by a smile you can stab a child of ten to the heart, and they never forget it, psychologists tell us, and that smile may alter all the future. His

mother was a very wise woman, and she did not smile; she lifted it up, and when Norman came back at night for his tea, there was his bill lying on his plate, and on it, 1s. 6d.

Well, he thought, that was splendid; and then, just beside it, he noticed another bill, and taking it up and reading it, this is what he found written on it :—

NORMAN OWES MOTHER

For ten years of a happy home	Nothing
For food and clothes for ten years	Nothing
For nursing through Whooping Cough, Scarlet Fever, and Measles	Nothing
For being generally good to him	Nothing
Total .	Nothing

And when Norman read it he felt—excuse me using the language, but this is just what he said—he felt a little beast, and he rushed up to his mother and said, "Mother, I love you." That was all.

My dear boys and girls, if God were to render a bill to you, did you ever think how great it would be? But He never does, for all He wants from us is, that you and I, with our heart, with our mind, with our strength, and with our soul, will just *love* Him.

XI

THE MORNING STAR

"I am the bright and morning star."—Rev. xxii. 16.

When you read the opening chapters of the Book of Revelation you find there a number of wonderful promises, and you soon discover that most of these promises are made to a particular class of people. They are not made to the rich, and they are not made to the poor. They are not made to the clever, and they are not made to the dull. They are made to one class of person, and one only, and that is the person who *overcomes*. Now what is the meaning of that word overcoming? Well, boys and girls, for you it just means this. If you are tempted to-morrow in school to tell a lie, or to take a look at your neighbour's slate or copy; or if you are tempted to be unkind at

home, or to be rude to your mother or your governess, if you are tempted so, and asking God to help you, you crush that temptation under your little feet, then all these glorious promises are for you, although you won't be ten till your next birthday.

Now, of all the promises of these chapters, I think one of the most beautiful is this, "I will give you the morning star." Do you know what it means? Can you think what Jesus meant by it? I shall tell you some of the thoughts which it suggests to me.

In the first place, it whispers to me of *honour*, for a star is the badge of honour and of royalty. Some of the oldest orders of knighthood in the world have for their chief ornament a little star.

The Irish Crown jewels were stolen some years ago, and do you know what the most valuable of these jewels was? It was the diamond star of the Grand-master of the Order of St Patrick, and it was valued at the sum of thirty thousand pounds. Or to go back to

the Bible, we read in the Book of Numbers of a prophecy that was uttered by Balak, and as Balak looked forward to the coming Ruler, do you recall the words he was inspired to say? "A star," he said, "shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel." A star then is the badge of honour and of dignity.

Do you see one of the meanings of this promise, then? It is the promise of Christ to enrol us among His knights if we are valiant in battle, and dare to overcome. We may never do anything worthy of renown, or have our name inscribed on the roll-call of the great; we may never win the attention of the world, or do deeds that will go ringing down the aisles of time; but if we are faithful in battling with our sins and in mastering our temptations when they meet us, then Christ will make us His honourable knights, and will give us the decoration of the star.

Again, we always associate stars with *brightness*, do we not? and especially

the morning star. The morning star, as you know, is also the evening star, and the evening star is one of the most beautiful that makes us glad with its glory in the sky. The boys who are reading Homer will remember that Homer calls it the brightest star in heaven; and Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, speaks of

> Hesperus, that led
> That starry host, rode brightest.

I take it, then, that this is a promise of brightness, made by Jesus to all who overcome, and a pledge that no one will grow to a dull manhood who sets himself valiantly to master sin.

There are two ways, boys and girls, to grow up bright. The one way is to be clever, and you can't all be clever. The other way is to be good, and you can all be good. For there's not a sin that you crush under your feet, and not a battle you win over yourself, but will give you a brighter eye and a brighter heart, and bring you nearer the gladness of the star.

Then, once more, when we think of the stars we think of *steadfastness*. There is something in the stars, as they shine on a clear night, that tells of a steady and unfaltering purpose. There is an artist who has written some beautiful letters, and in one of them he speaks about the stars in this way: "A star is ever the same, it is for ever shining. The leaves are tossing on the grass, or perishing in the pool, but the star is simple and the same." Do you remember, too, the words of the poet Keats, when he was leaving England and going abroad to die? He wrote a beautiful sonnet beginning thus, "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art."

I think then that our promise conveys this, that if we overcome we shall grow steadfast. If we are brave in battling with our sins to-day Christ will make us more than conquerors to-morrow. For there is no promise of a steadfast future unless to-day we be valiant for the good, and be getting ready for our

sterner battles, in the quiet years of boyhood and of girlhood.

Then, lastly, do you remember what Christ calls Himself in the closing chapter of this Book? "I am the root and offspring of David," He says, "and the bright and morning star." The morning star, then, is a name for *Christ Himself*, and when the morning star is promised to a person, it just means that he shall get, for his own, the Saviour Who lives for evermore. That is a promise that is always true. The way to know Christ well is *to overcome*, for by every little victory we win, and by every temptation we trample under foot, we gain fresh knowledge of the Saviour's love, and of the depth and glory of His friendship.

XII

ON LAMBS

"He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree."—LUKE i. 52.

TRAVELLING home from London the other day there was one thing that arrested my attention. It was the lambs which one saw everywhere. In the flat fields of England, on the hills of Cumberland, in the rich pastures of the South of Scotland, and on the braes of Upper Lanarkshire—everywhere lambs, some of them sleeping, others feeding, some pretending to be greatly terrified at the snorting monster of the train, and others standing stiff and stark, as if wondering what on earth their legs were meant for.

When I looked at them this text came into my mind :

"He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree."

When Mary spoke these words, she was thinking about men and women, but, when you come to think of it, is it not true of beasts and birds? Thousands of years ago, for instance, the world was full of great and hideous creatures, which crashed through the forests and went screaming through the air. In those days, too, were tiny butterflies, for butterflies are very ancient creatures. And now the gigantic monsters have all vanished and the butterflies are still with us, more beautiful than ever. You see God has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted those of low degree.

Now the lamb is a very lowly creature. It is a woolly, fuzzy, helpless little thing. It is not half so intelligent as a puppy, and has none of the daring of a lion's cub. And yet is it not a beautiful thing how God exalted this little creature of low degree? Let me show you two ways in which He has done it.

Think first what a large place in the Bible is given to the lamb. I believe it

is mentioned oftener in Scripture than any other animal. We hear now and then in the Bible about lions, and there are one or two references to whales. When Job talks about behemoth and leviathan he is speaking of the hippopotamus and of the crocodile. These mighty creatures are very seldom mentioned, but think how different it is with the lamb. The lamb is in the first Book of the Bible and in the last Book of the Bible. You find it in the Psalms and in the Prophets. It has a place in the Gospels and in the Epistles, where we read of a "lamb without blemish and without spot." And not only do we find it in the fields, but we also come on it in the Temple, and at last, in the Book of Revelation, we see a lamb upon the throne.

There is a poem by a living poet on that strange creature, the ass. He pictures it with its great patient eyes, cudgelled, and beaten, and kicked, and then the ass, remembering the day when our Saviour made His triumphant entry

into Jerusalem, riding on his back, says, "I also had my day." In the same way, if the lambs could speak, I think they would turn to the great cows and horses and say, "You may despise me as a stupid little thing, but I am mentioned oftener in the Bible than the lot of you."

Then, think how God exalted the lamb by giving this name to the Lord Jesus. What greater honour could have been done it than that? Remember how John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Remember how the other John beheld a "lamb as it had been slain"; and then think of our beautiful hymn, every verse of which closes with the words,

O Lamb of God, I come.

Our Lord was never called by the name of some great monster that screams through the air or crashes through the forest. It is the crowning exaltation of the lamb that he has given a name to our Blessed Saviour.

I close by reading to you a little famous poem by a strange man of genius called William Blake. Many of you doubtless know it by heart. It runs like this—

Little lamb, who made thee ?
Dost thou know who made thee ?
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead ;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright ;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice ?
  Little lamb who made thee ?
  Dost thou know who made thee ?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee ;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee ;
  He is calléd by thy name,
  For He calls Himself a lamb.
  He is meek, and He is mild,
  He became a little child.
  I a child, and thou a lamb,
  We are calléd by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee.
Little lamb, God bless thee.

XIII

THE WONDERFUL DRESS

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. xiii. 14.

Our Blessed Saviour is the very centre of the New Testament, and it is very interesting to notice how many different things our Saviour is compared to in the Bible. It would make an interesting study for you on the Sunday afternoons to try and find out how many different sorts of things our Blessed Lord is compared to.

He is compared, for instance, to a light—the Light of the World; to a shepherd; He is compared to a rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley; He is compared to a pearl of great price; to a lion; to a lamb; and then, in our text this morning, our Lord is actually compared to a dress, to a robe, to a garment.

Now that is a very bold thing to do, but then this writer was one of the boldest men who ever lived, and was never afraid to speak out the truth. I daresay you remember the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and how, when the Prodigal came home, the father cried to the servants, "Bring forth the best *robe* and put it on him." Now that is the very word that Paul uses here. I daresay Paul was thinking about that when he said, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

To-day I am going, just for a few minutes, to follow up that thought, and I will try to do it with the greatest reverence, because it is not my thought, it is the New Testament thought of our Lord Jesus as a dress, a robe, a garment.

Now it is a very wonderful Dress, and the first thing to notice is, It is the only Dress I know about that you get *for nothing*. I suppose you boys and girls read the advertisements in the papers. They are often the most interesting things in the papers, because people

pay to put them in. Well, now, if you look at the advertisements of suits and dresses there, they all seem to cost a great deal of money.

You walk down the streets and look at the things in the windows; they also cost a great deal of money, and are quite beyond the purse of that poor old woman selling flowers, or that disabled man standing beside the pavement. They are not meant for them. You see they have not got the money, they cannot go in and buy them, they are far too dear. The wonderful thing about this Dress in our text is, you get It for nothing. You cannot buy Christ, you have just got to take Him. He is the greatest gift of God's love. As the hymn says, "Nothing in my hand I bring," and then you remember it goes on to say, "Naked, come to Thee for dress." That means, be clothed in Truth, Humility, Kindness. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, the next thing about this Wonderful Garment is that It fits every-

body. You never heard that about any other kind of clothes. It is one of the most uncomfortable things in the world to have clothes that don't fit you. That is why most men and boys like their old clothes, and don't want to part with them. If you are a very little boy it is not the least use you offering your suit to a great big boy, because it would not fit him; he would not thank you for it. Even your father's clothes have got to be made down if you are going to wear them. But the wonderful thing about this Dress is, It fits everybody.

I never heard anybody yet say that Christ did not *suit* (note the word), that Christ did not suit them. The child, the man out at business, the poor old woman up in the attic, the king, the beggar, whenever they come to know this Saviour they come to feel that He exactly fits them. A suitable Saviour for the sinner. Paul says, "Put on," just as every morning you put on your clothes, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

And then the last thing about this

Wonderful Dress is *that It never grows old or shabby, never.* You boys get a new suit, or you girls a new dress, and for a little while you think it is just perfect. Then, after a little time, it begins to get shabby, a little fringed round the sleeves, until at last you go to your mother and you say, "Mother, I do wish you would speak to Father and get him to give me a new dress (or suit), this one is getting old, and I am tired of it."

The wonderful thing about this Spiritual Dress is, It never gets shabby. That means that if, when you are a little boy you get to know Christ, when you come to be very, very old at forty, He is just as fresh and new as He was when you first put Him on. No matter how long you live, He is just as fresh and new at the end of your life as when you are a child. He makes all things new, as at the beginning.

Will you remember, then, the three reasons for thinking why this is such a Wonderful Dress :

1st. Because It does not cost anything.
2nd. Because It fits everybody.
3rd. Because It never grows shabby or out of date.

And so Paul, perhaps thinking of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, uses the very word that our Lord Himself uses there, and says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

XIV

THE CUP IN THE SACK

"And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack."—GEN. xliv. 12.

I THINK that all of you, even the youngest, are familiar with the story of Joseph. You know how he was cast into the pit by his jealous brethren, and rescued and taken down to Egypt; you know how he became a great man there, so that all the power of Pharaoh was in his hand; and then you know how the years of famine came. Then his brethren came down for corn, you remember, and Joseph knew them, although they did not know him, and he filled their sacks and sent them home again, and told them to come back with their youngest brother Benjamin.

And now the men are back again, and Benjamin their brother is with them,

although his father was almost broken-hearted at his leaving. Well now, their sacks are filled and they have left the city, and they are out on the dusty country road, under the scorching sun, and on either side there are the palm trees waving, when suddenly they hear the galloping of horses, and the officers of Joseph's household call on them to halt, for someone has stolen their master's cup, a cup that was priceless and very dear to him. You can imagine how they protested their innocence, and how willingly they allowed their sacks to be opened, and then we read what our text says: "And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack."

Now the first thing I learn here is this, that things are found sometimes in the last place where we would look for them. I would never have expected for a moment to find this cup in the sack of Benjamin. I should not have been surprised if one of the brothers had stolen the cup. Men who would treat their brother as they had treated

Joseph, and who would lie to their father as they had lied to Jacob, well, I should never be surprised to hear that they had proved guilty of stealing silver cups; but it was not in their sacks that the cup was found, it was found in the sack of the young and innocent Benjamin.

So I learn that things are sometimes found in the last place where we would look for them. Some of the most beautiful and brilliant dyes are found where? In the refuse of coal tar. The cloth of this beautiful gown which I am wearing is found in the cocoon of a worm.

And long ago there came to earth One Whom God loved very dearly, and He was found not in a gilded palace, but in the cold manger of an inn. It is a lesson to us to keep our eyes open as we journey through the world. There is a plant in flower just now which is called eye-bright, and we all need to have our eyes touched with that. In this strange world some of the finest things are found not where you and I

would expect them, but in the last place where we should look for them.

The next lesson which I learn here is this, that in what is ours there may be far more than we know. You see there was far more in the sack of Benjamin than he ever dreamt of that morning in the country. If you had said to him, "Well, Benjamin, what is in that sack of yours?" he would have answered, "Why, there is a load of corn in it that I am taking to my old father." That was all that the sack contained in Benjamin's eyes, but in the eyes of Joseph, who loved Benjamin with all his heart, the sack contained what was far more precious than that.

Now it is just there that Joseph becomes to us like Jesus, for there are no eyes so wonderful as those of Jesus, Who sees far more than we should ever dream of. He sees a Kingdom in a mustard seed; a citizen of heaven in a little child; and in the common flowers of the field a glory greater than the glory of Solomon. He sees in poor,

shifty Simon Peter a rock fit for the building of a Church. He sees in you and me this morning more and better things than we could hope for. It is this that makes the Gospel of Christ so hopeful. It is this that makes the gladness of His fellowship. There is no one who sees so much as Jesus sees, and thousands of people are saved just by being seen by Him.

Then, in the last place, I find here a simple yet great lesson against judging. I am sure, if you and I had been there, we would all have thought that Benjamin was guilty. I daresay that where this happened in the country there stood a cottage by the road-side, and you can imagine how the father and the mother and all the children would come out, and they would gather round the company of brothers. They would watch all that was going on, and they would see what happened when the officers came to Benjamin. Every one of them would think him guilty. The father would turn to the mother and say,

"Ah, yes! I can see it in his face, I would have known it." His brothers were all convinced he was a thief, and yet, though everything looked black as night against him, we know that Benjamin was innocent as a child.

Is not this story a very stern lesson to us that we should be very charitable and slow in judging others, and very careful not to spread unkind stories? I want you to write upon your hearts that great word of Jesus Christ, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." I want you to remember that people may be charged with wrong-doing, and that things may look black against them as they looked against Benjamin, yet all the time in the sight of God they may be guiltless and innocent as babes. "Judge not that ye be not judged."

XV

THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE

"Only be sure that thou eat not the blood; for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."—DEUT. xii. 23.

Preached on Sunday, 20th May 1928

THREE hundred years ago last week there was issued from the press in London one of the most important books the world has ever seen. It was not in any sense a popular book, for it was written in somewhat crabbed Latin. Nor was it an interesting book like one of the tales of Robert Louis Stevenson, but everybody will agree with me that it was one of the most important books that has ever been published in the course of history. It was a treatise on the circulation of the blood by Dr William Harvey, and it was in that treatise he announced his discovery to the world.

William Harvey was an English doctor,

educated at Canterbury and at Cambridge and in Italy. He was physician to King James I and to King Charles I, but a great deal of his time was spent in lecturing, though whether he was a good or poor lecturer I am not aware that anybody knows. The one thing that made him famous was his discovery of the circulation of the blood, and I wish to tell you some of the thoughts that that book has brought to me.

The first is how quietly great things come into the world. I do not imagine there was any stir when that Latin treatise reached the public. If any man was hung that week there would be immense excitement and huge crowds. If the King came riding down the street there would be faces peering out of every window. But this book that was to change our knowledge, and indirectly affect each one of us, came to the world as quietly as a snowflake.

I do not think anybody went rushing home crying, "Wife, Dr Harvey has published a new volume." I do not

think crowds gathered before his windows, cheering him for his discovery. Quietly, like the dew or the first sweet flowers of spring, this great discovery was made known to men. Then, of course, one thinks of Jesus, for that was exactly how He came; a little baby thing, whom nobody heeded, for the travellers in the inn went on with their food and business; and yet the greatest event that ever happened in the long history of man was the coming of Jesus Christ into our world.

Again I learn the lesson that one can be certain of what he cannot see. It is very interesting to remember that Harvey never saw the circulation of the blood. To-day we have very powerful microscopes, and anyone can see it, and see, too, these delicate capillaries which carry the blood from artery to vein. But Harvey had no microscope, he had only a few lenses, and yet he was perfectly certain of the circulation of the blood.

One feels that it is just like that with God. Scripture says that no man hath

seen God at any time. And yet we can be just as sure of God as Harvey was of circulation. As a matter of fact you are sure of Africa, although most of you have never seen it. And I am sure of the United States, though I never have seen them. If you should ever hear any foolish person saying, "I can never be sure of what I cannot see," I want you to remember William Harvey and the circulation of the blood.

The last thing I want to say is that there is a greater discovery even than Dr Harvey's; and I shall illustrate that by telling a little story. The discoverer of chloroform was Sir James Simpson, an Edinburgh doctor and professor. He was buried fifty-eight years ago last Sunday, in the Warriston Cemetery at Edinburgh. And once, when an interviewer asked him what was the greatest discovery he ever made, he answered, "The greatest discovery I ever made was that I have a Saviour." He never thought of chloroform, though that discovery has made his name immortal.

He never thought of anything scientific. He said, "The greatest discovery I ever made was that I have a Saviour."

My dear boys, some of you here this morning may live to make some great discovery. I believe the world is trembling on the verge of great discoveries. If Mr Baird of Helensburgh discovered television, why should you not make some great discovery? But my trust is that every one of you, when you grow famous, and interviewers come and question you, will be able to say like Sir James Simpson, "The greatest discovery I ever made was that I have a Saviour."

XVI

THE GIFT LAMP

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."—Ps. cxix. 105.

I KNOW you all like getting presents, and I got a very beautiful present yesterday, and although it is a little larger text than what I usually bring into the pulpit, I brought it with me this morning. Now I think you will all agree that this is a very beautiful thing—it is a lamp.

Now I will tell you how I got it. There was a young woman in this congregation whom I was able to help to get a post as stewardess, and her ship sailed to India; and while she was in India she searched out this, and being quite sure that I would like it, she brought it home to me, and I just got it yesterday. A very old lamp, and I have an idea that it is Aladdin's lamp; of course Aladdin's lamp was in China,

but it is not very far from China to India. I have not rubbed it yet, but I am going to rub it to-morrow, and if a genie appears I won't tell you what I am going to ask him, but there is something I am going to ask him.

Now the curious thing is, this lamp arrived just when I was thinking about you, and wondering what I would talk about to-morrow morning to the boys and girls. Mark you, I was not worrying, because I never worry about these things now; I find that if you just sit quietly and wait for God, He will always give you the very thing He wants you to talk about, and just when I was sitting wondering what I would talk to you about the door opened, and in walked my text (I mean, my wife walked in, carrying this lamp), and I said this to myself, "That is God's text for the boys and girls to-morrow morning, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet.'"

Let me show you just in a word or two why that lamp is like the Bible. Well now, first of all, this lamp came

from very far away, it came to me from a land thousands of miles away across the sea. It was not made in Glasgow, or Scotland, and I can assure you it was not made in Birmingham; this lamp was found in a land thousands of miles away, and then brought to me in Scotland, and that is exactly like the other lamp, the Bible, is it not? The Bible was never made in Scotland. It was made in a little land across the sea called Palestine, by people who speak different tongues from yours, people who belonged to different races, and yet it has been brought all the way across the sea to you and me. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."

Once again, don't you see, this lamp is one that I can carry; you would be surprised how light it is, you can try it in the vestry if you like after the service. You know there are some lamps you never could carry. I have got a lamp in my drawing-room, and I certainly would not like to carry it upstairs, and all the boys in this Church could not

carry an electric standard in our streets; but this is a lamp that I can carry quite easily, and is not that like the Bible?

Some of God's lamps you cannot carry. There is "the glorious lamp of heaven, the sun;" there are the lamps that come out at night in the sky, we call them stars. The wonderful thing about God's lamp is, you can carry it anywhere. You can carry it to school, you can carry it on holiday. Some people never forget that God loves them, but sometimes they forget to carry their Bibles. But when you go on holiday please don't forget it. Foreign missionaries can carry it to the darkest places of the earth, where it sheds light into heathen hearts and homes. Our dear soldier boys, whose names are on these tablets, I think they all carried it to the War.

You know when young people join this Church they get a little Testament, their name on it, and the date on it, and I don't think there was a single boy from this Church who went to the

War who did not carry that Testament with him, and many times when nothing came back but his kit, in a little pocket there was the lamp, his Testament. You can carry it anywhere and, remember, not only in your hands, but also in your hearts.

An atheist, once talking to a dear old Christian, said, "Is your God a great God or a little God?" And he replied, "Sir, my God is such a great God that the heavens won't contain Him, and such a little God that I can carry Him within my heart." Now, that is like the Bible. Your mother or your grannie had a great deal of the Bible off by heart, though I don't think that is done so much now, but I would like you boys and girls to learn parts of the Bible by heart when you are young, and then all through your days, just when you need it most, you will be able to say, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."

Then, lastly, there is something else, for whenever I look at this lamp, I know that the giver was thinking about me.

Here she was in India, in a strange country, and a great deal of excitement, and a great deal to see, and whenever I look at this lamp, I think I will remember that she was thinking about me. Well now, whenever you look at or read the Bible, that is what you must think. We are all very apt to think, "Oh, God does not bother about me, God is never troubling about me, He is so great, and I am such a little child." My dear children, whenever you look at the Bible you are quite entitled to say, "In that far land that we call Heaven, God was thinking about me." The Bible was not written for angels, it was written for men and women, boys and girls. When God gave it He was thinking about you, and the greatest proof of His love and thought for us is shown in the gift of His Son Jesus.

Well now, can we go back again, can you write down the heads of my little sermon? This lamp came from far away. This lamp is a lamp that I can carry. Whenever I look at it I remember that

the giver was thinking of me. Then I open the Book of Psalms where the Psalmist talks about the Bible, and I read, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."

XVII

THE UNTRANSLATED WORDS OF JESUS

I WANT to speak a few words this morning upon some of the untranslated words of Jesus. I wonder if you ever ask yourselves what language our Lord spoke. That, you know, is a very interesting question. Perhaps you think because the New Testament is written in Greek, that our Blessed Lord spoke Greek. Well, our Lord, I am perfectly certain, understood Greek, and could use it if the occasion offered, perhaps used it when He talked to the Roman Centurion; but in the cottage, and in the village street, and talking to His disciples He certainly would not talk Greek.

Then perhaps some of you think because He was a Jew that He talked Hebrew, but you know in our Lord's

time people did not talk Hebrew. The Hebrew of the Old Testament was related to the language He spoke somewhat as Anglo-Saxon is to the English of to-day. What our Lord did talk at home and talked amongst His friends, and talked in the Sermon on the Mount, was the commonly spoken language called Aramaic, or Assyrian, or Chaldee; and it is very interesting to remember that there are people in the world who are talking that language to this day, and that is really why I am speaking on this subject this morning.

We had in Glasgow some time ago an extraordinarily interesting character, an Assyrian General. His home was behind Nineveh, his name was General Agha Petros. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Assyrian Forces during the Great War. The little Christian Assyrian army and he fought, officered by Scotsmen (one of them a Glasgow man), fourteen battles against the Turks, and won them all. He was in Glasgow in the interests of the Assyrian refugees; he worshipped

in this Church, and greatly enjoyed the services.

If you boys and girls had seen him as some of us did in the City Chambers, ablaze with orders—the Cross of Saint Andrew of Russia, the Legion of Honour of France, and all sorts of orders—you would have thought he was a very picturesque figure. But, I think what interested most of us was this, that he told us they were talking at home still, away up in the mountains behind Nineveh, in the North of Mesopotamia, the very language that our Lord spoke, and, because he gave us one or two instances of that, I am speaking this morning to you on the untranslated words of Jesus.

For instance, General Petros said this, "I have got children at home and, like other people, they are sometimes a little unwilling to get up in the morning, and my wife will go in to waken them, and if it is a daughter she is speaking to, she does not say, 'Daughter, it's time to get up,' but she says, 'Talitha cumi'; if it is a boy she would say, 'Talit cumi,'

but if it is a girl she says, 'Talitha cumi' —'Daughter, it is time to get up.'" Now, boys and girls, I think you all know where you get that in the Gospels, don't you? I want you to turn with me to the Gospel according to St Mark, chapter 5, verse 41. Here you have got our Lord speaking, talking Aramaic or Chaldee, "And He took the damsel by the hand and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise," or, in a more homely way, as the General put it, "Daughter, it's time to get up."

Again, he told us that when his children come home from school (and the schools there are conducted by American Presbyterians), when his children come home from school perhaps the door is shut. Well, you know it is not very safe there to be out in the open, a great many devil-worshippers camp out there, and the child will knock at the door and want to get in, and if nobody comes the child will cry, "Open, open," and, of course, they cannot talk English, although the

father talked excellent English, but the child will say, "Ephphatha, ephphatha." And now, boys and girls, turn to the 7th chapter of St Mark, 34th verse, and once more our Lord is talking what you might call Chaldee, "And looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened." You see it was just as if our Lord was knocking at that man's eyes and saying, "Open, open, I want the light to get in." And they are using that saying to this day.

But I think the last thing he told us was even more interesting and more solemn. He said this: "Supposing my wife and I go out some afternoon, and we leave our family at home, and then, suppose we make more calls than we intended, and we are late in getting home. Of course, in this country the children would not mind in the least, but in that country they are never quite safe, and when the darkness comes the children get anxious, and so when I come to the door the children say,

'Father, what has kept you, where have you been, why have you left us like this?'" And you know, the beautiful thing is that what these little people say is something like this, "Lama sabachthani?" "Father, why have you left us like this?" They say it to-day. Turn up once more, and lastly, the 27th chapter of St Matthew, 46th verse, where you read, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" Just as if our Lord were a little child beginning to get frightened, feeling all alone, and crying out to His Father, "Where are you, why are you not home, we are very lonely without you?"

And these are the three examples in the Gospels where you have untranslated words of Jesus, and which were brought home to me in a new and vivid manner after my interesting conversation with this Christian General Agha Petros.

XVIII

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

"Be ye holy."—LUKE xx. 7.

I WANT to give you a little address this morning upon these words, "Be ye holy." I think this is just a very suitable text for young people, because of the three words two are of one syllable and the other is of two syllables, just as if God were thinking about you when He put it into His Bible. The text is a little family of two twin sisters of two years, and a big brother of four. Now, I suppose you all know what initials are. If your name is James Brown, your initials are J. B., or if your name is Mary Smith, your initials are M. S.

Well, I want to take the four letters of this word "Holy," and use them as initials to see whether we can understand what it means for a boy or a girl to be

holy. I am quite sure if anybody were to say to you, "You are a holy boy," you would just hate it. It is the last thing in the world some of you would want anyone to say to you, but when you come to understand what it really means I think you will find things very different.

Now suppose you take "H." I think you have got to make "H" stand for what is *honest and honourable.* I want you dear young people to remember that you never can be holy unless, just to begin with, you are strictly honest and honourable, and boys and girls are just as much tempted to steal as sometimes other people are.

I think one of the most objectionable little dogs in the world is the dog that is called "dis." He is a dog that is always worrying what is beautiful. He worries honour, and it becomes dishonour; he worries honesty, and it becomes dishonesty; he worries grace, and it becomes disgrace; and he worries ease, and it becomes disease. You must always keep out of the road of that little cur.

And the worst of dishonesty is that it is just like a hole in a boy's pocket. A boy's pocket is a wonderful thing—if he would only turn it out sometimes—a slate pencil in it, a lead pencil in it, india-rubber in it, and, if it is a fortunate day, perhaps a penny in it, or even more now (in my boyhood there was never more than one). Then comes a little hole in the pocket, and first of all out slips a slate pencil, then it gets a little larger and out slips the lead pencil, then the india-rubber goes, then the penny would go if it had not been spent, as it probably has; and, dear boys and girls, that is how people become dishonest, beginning with tiny little things that don't seem to matter, and on and on it goes, and you will never be holy, no matter how much you pray or come to Church, unless you are honest, never.

I notice the second letter is "O," and that, of course, must stand for *obedient.* Nobody ever becomes holy unless they are obedient, because to be holy is not what people mean when they say, "Oh, he

is a holy boy." To be holy is just to be like Christ. You can never forget how obedient Christ was. Why, when He was twelve years of age He went up to Jerusalem, and there the knowledge broke on Him that He was going to have such a wonderful life, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" and then, don't you remember how we read, "He went down with His parents and was *obedient* unto them." Mary would say to Him, "My son, you go and chop that wood," or she might say, "I am very tired this evening, I have been scrubbing all day, will you go out and get the water from the well?" and "He went down with His parents and was obedient unto them," and you never can be like Him unless you are obedient also.

I remember hearing a story of a gardener who had planted sweet-peas in his garden, and then as they grew up he tied them to the sticks that he had put in beside them, and they all began to grow. One of them did not want to be

tied up and confined like that, one of them wanted his liberty. The story said that every time he burst the threads, and while the other plants were growing up beautiful, higher and higher into the sunlight, this one, at last, was all straggling in the mud, cats sitting on it, dogs romping over it, and all because it had not the good sense to be obedient to the gardener. The Bible says we are God's husbandry.

We have settled "H" and "O," and then, of course, "L" stands for *loving*. Nobody is ever like Christ unless he is loving. You may be tremendously in earnest, you may be tremendously orthodox, but if you are not loving you are never like Him, and to be like Him, or to be like God, and God is Love, that is to be holy. There is an old story of St John, who wrote the Gospel. When St John was a very old man lying on his death-bed people came to him, expecting to hear some wonderful things, and all that St John would say to them was this, "Little children, love one another." And

they would say to him, " But surely, aged disciple, with all your experience, you have got something else to say to us than that," and John said, " No, nothing else. Little children, love one another." And does not that make all the difference ?

My old teacher, Professor Henry Drummond, used to put it like this : " Suppose you get a carpenter to make a box, and it comes home, and there is a scratch in the varnish, and the lock is not just right, you tell him that is not what you ordered, and you won't take it. But if your little boy, with his first set of tools, makes a box, there may be no varnish on it at all, and no lock, and it is not quite square, but when he brings it to you, you are just delighted, kiss him, and say it is the most wonderful box you ever saw." And don't you see ? It is just love that makes all the difference.

So I take " H " for *honest and honourable*, you have all got to be that, and " O " for *obedient*, and " L " for *loving*, and " Y," well " Y " is not for me, " Y " is for *you*. I am not talking to the grown-ups

this morning. I am talking to you, and you have got to be honest and obedient and loving, because our text says to *you* this morning, "Be ye holy, for I am the Lord Thy God."

XIX

NESTS

CHILDREN'S FLOWER SERVICE

In the Gospel according to St Matthew, 8th chapter and 20th verse, you read these words : " The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests." Now the text I am going to take this afternoon is, " The birds of the air have nests," and first of all I am going to read to you a letter which appeared in a paper called *The Garden*, and reads as follows :

" Dear Sir,

" I noticed under a laburnum tree a great quantity of flowers. I could not make out who had plucked them, and then it occurred to me that it was the sparrows. I got my gardener to get the sparrows' nest, and to my surprise the sparrows' nest was made entirely of

laburnum flowers. I knew that sparrows were very destructive, but it was quite new to me that they should make their nests of flowers.

"Yours,
"C. D.,
"CHESHIRE."

Now, I think these sparrows were little artists. Sparrows' nests, as you know—we have all seen the sparrow's nest—are made of twigs or of any little thing the sparrow can get; but these little artists said, "We are going to make our nest of flowers," and they made their nest of these laburnum flowers. I think they were little poets. If you and I could understand what the sparrows say, I think you would find this sparrow and his wife writing poetry. I would like to be able to read it. Now suppose a fairy were to come, and that fairy were to turn you into a sparrow. Of course some of you would much rather be turned into a beautiful bird, a bird that could sing; but just suppose your fairy-

godmother were to come and turn each of you into a sparrow, and then say to you, "My dear sparrow, I want you to build your nest of flowers," I wonder what flowers you would choose?

I think, first of all, I would build my nest with a little flower called Eye-bright. I tried to get one for you yesterday, but I could not. Eye-bright generally grows on the moors, and I was not on the moors yesterday. I think if I were going to build my nest I would build it with Eye-bright. It teaches you not to keep your eyes upon what is dark, but on what is bright.

I wonder if you ever heard this story of Jesus? Once, in a market-place there was lying a dead dog, and people came up and looked at that dead dog and said, "What an ugly beast that dead dog is," and they turned away. Then Somebody came into the market, and He came up and looked at the dog, and what He said was this, "Pearls could not equal the whiteness of his teeth." He was the only man who saw in that dirty dead dog

a set of beautiful white teeth. Then the people looked at each other and they said, "This must be Jesus, because nobody but Jesus could see the white teeth in a dead dog." You know that is what He is doing yet, and you and I ought to try to see all that is best and brightest in people and in things around us.

Yes, but if I were a sparrow I'd build my nest of Pansies. Do you know why? Because Pansies mean thoughts, and, dear boys and girls, none of you is too young to learn that you ought to be thoughtful. A great many boys and girls, just the nicest you can meet, are sometimes a little thoughtless. One of our poets said—

> Evil is wrought by want of thought,
> As well as by want of heart.

I have known a boy come home from school and his mother was not very well, she had a bad headache, or she was sick. Do you know what he did? He banged the door, then he started whistling—I wish I could whistle half as loud—then

he clattered up the stairs and flung down his bag. You know it was just as if swords had been going into his mother's head. Now that boy loved his mother, he never meant to be cruel. Don't you see he was just a little thoughtless? So I would build my nest, if I were you, with Pansies.

A friend of mine was looking out of the window on a windy day, and he saw four boys sliding. They had made a great slide on the pavement (the police were not there), and just when they had made their slide along came a little girl carrying a basket, and in the basket a number of things. Of course when she got on the slide down she went, and everything was flung out of the basket. Well, three of the boys stood and laughed at her until they could not laugh any more. And the other boy—I think he was a boy scout, I don't think he had done his good deed that day and he wanted to do it now—quite quietly came up and helped the girl up, and picked up the basket and the groceries and put

them into the basket, and she went away just as happily as if a White Knight had come riding down the street. I want you to put Pansies into the nest.

There is another plant I want you to put in. Do you know what that is? (Showing it.) That is not the Red Campion, that is Ragged Robin. I think I would build my nest with this, and I mean that if you are comfortably off, if you have got a nice home and all sorts of good things, perhaps a bicycle, or a boat, or a little motor car, you must never forget the "ragged robins." Because you go to a private school you are never to taunt and sneer at a boy because he goes to a board school. You have got to remember these are your brothers and sisters, "comrades" as people are calling them now.

There was a class of boys from a great public school in England, and one day they went out with their teacher for a walk. When they came to a field, do you know what they found? They found a pair of shoes, a poor pair of shoes.

They belonged to a man who was working in a ditch near by, and had taken off his shoes. One boy said to another, "Come on and we'll fill his shoes with mud" —just what boys would do—and the teacher heard him, and said, "Boys, that is not what a gentleman ought to do." Do you know what the teacher did? He took half a crown out of his pocket and put it into one shoe, then he took half a crown out of his other pocket and put it into the other shoe; then he called the boys and they went behind the hedge.

The man came back and put his foot into his shoe. What was this? Half a crown. Why, he had to work a half-day to make half a crown. Then he put his foot into the other. Another half-crown. And do you know what he did? The man went down on his knees, and then he began thanking God, because his wife was very ill and it was just five shillings he wanted to get her something nice. You have always to build your nest that way, with Ragged Robins.

Then, lastly, I think I would make my nest of a little plant called *Star of Bethlehem.* The real Star of Bethlehem is yellow, but it does not grow here, and there is a nice little plant, white, that *we* call Star of Bethlehem. And what I mean is this, dear children, never leave Jesus out of your nest. If you leave Him out do you know who comes in? Satan. And when Satan comes in it is a terrible nest. Never leave Jesus out. Take Him as your Friend, take Him as your Saviour, take Him now.

Now do you remember what I have been trying to say? First, the sparrows built their nests of laburnum flowers, but suppose you were to be turned into sparrows, and were to build your nests of flowers, what flowers would you use?

I'd build mine of Eye-bright, and always see the bright side.

I'd build mine of Pansies, and try always to be thoughtful.

I'd build mine of Ragged Robins. I'd help all the people who were not so happy as I was, and try to be their friend.

I'd build mine of Star of Bethlehem, because I want Jesus to come in.

O come to my *nest*, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my nest for Thee.

XX

JEHOVAH NISSI

THE LORD MY BANNER

"And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi."—Exod. xvii. 15.

From the earliest times and in all parts of the world the banner has been looked on as a *sacred* thing. The reason of that is very easily seen, and it has made the feeling a universal one. The old Assyrians, as we know from tablets, used to paint their gods upon their banners. Each tribe of Israel, as they journeyed through the desert, had its own banner. The Romans had an image of their Emperor upon their banners, and as they worshipped their Emperors that made their banners holy. The red, white, and blue upon our banners is said to represent the Trinity. And you know how often in the flags of Christendom we have the sign and symbol of the Cross of Christ.

If you have ever seen a religious procession on the Continent you remember how the banners were waving there. And in our own cathedral, what hang upon the walls are not pictures, but the tattered colours of our regiments. A banner, then, among all peoples, has been looked on as a kind of sacred thing, and that, doubtless, was in the heart of Moses when he said, "Jehovah Nissi—the Lord is my banner."

A banner afforded guidance to the army. In one of the critical battles of the Civil War in America a young soldier, who acted as flag-bearer, was badly wounded. He was shot through the thigh, and was carried off the field, and as they were taking him to a place of safety the one cry upon his lips was this, "Never mind me, but don't let the flag go down." That flag had led the army to the battlefield, and now, in his hands, it was leading them to victory, and the one cry upon his lips was this, "Never mind me, but don't let the flag go down."

You boys who are reading Greek and

Latin will remember some of the splendid marches of antiquity. You will remember the march of Xerxes as described by Xenophon, and the march of Hannibal as described by Livy. Now, in these splendid marches across the hills and through the ravines and over the great plains, always in front of the army was the banner.

"Jehovah Nissi — the Lord is my banner." That means that the Lord is guiding me. It means that, day by day and year by year, the Lord in His goodness is going on ahead. And it means also, that if I am His soldier I shall never hesitate to follow Him, and will always be quite confident that He is leading me to victory at last.

A banner united the members of the army. I daresay you recall the story of Constantine, who was one of the Emperors of Rome. He had a vision, on the eve of a great battle, of a cross in the sky, and under it these words, "In this conquer." Well, Constantine went out and conquered, and ever after that, upon

his banner, he had the sign and symbol of the Cross. Now I question if, in all history, there was ever so varied an army as that of Constantine. There were men in it from Asia Minor, and from the North of Africa, and perhaps from the Valley of the Clyde. How little they understood each other, how strange the speech of one was to the other, and yet they were all united into a common host because they fought under a common banner.

"Jehovah Nissi—the Lord is my banner." That means that we are one army in Christ Jesus. I think to-day of the boys in Calabar and in Manchuria and in Livingstonia, how different they are from you, and how little, if they met you, they would understand you. And yet, if this morning they are joining in Christian worship, and, thank God, thousands of them are doing that, they and you are soldiers in one common host, and are united under one common banner.

A banner was very precious to the army.

I daresay a boy might be ashamed of many things in Britain, but I never heard of one who was ashamed of the Union Jack. I daresay an American boy might be ashamed of many things in New York, but I never heard of one who was ashamed of the Stars and Stripes.

I remember once walking, on a hot afternoon, along a narrow and crowded street in Paris, when suddenly, across the street, my eye caught our national flag floating from the roof of a very ordinary building. In an instant I knew that that was the British Embassy, and that that spot across the street was British soil, and I remember yet the thrill of pride I felt in seeing our national flag in a foreign land.

One of the finest instances of this pride is told by Robert Louis Stevenson. It is about Admiral Duncan, a countryman of our own, who was fighting the Dutch off the Texel. His ships had mutinied and left him, and he was left alone in his flagship, *The Venerable*, and he knew quite well that if the Dutch came out

and attacked him his ship would be sunk. Then he turned to one of his officers and said, and you may be sure he would say it in broad Scotch, "I have taken soundings, and find that if *The Venerable* is sunk, my flag will still fly."

"Jehovah Nissi—the Lord is my banner," that means we must never be ashamed of God. If Jesus is our banner we shall never be ashamed of telling others that we are His followers, and there are quite a number of banners that we can display every day, even although we are quite small folk. We can fly the banner of Truth in our homes, at school, or at play, scorning to tell a lie even if it costs us dear. Then there is the banner of Self-Control, checking the angry word or hasty blow. And lastly, because I have not time to tell you any more just now, there is the banner of Happiness, because in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ there is perfect joy, and people seeing our happy faces will know at once whose banner we follow.

One of the finest of our Paraphrases is the fifty-fourth, and you know how the fifty-fourth begins :

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause,
Maintain the glory of His Cross,
And honour all His laws.

XXI

THE SERVICE OF ANGELS

EASTER

"And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted."—MARK xvi. 5.

I HAVE chosen this text because I think it suitable for this Easter Morn, and it bears several lessons for us.

First. This young Man, as we learn from the other Gospels, was an Angel, and the first thing that strikes me is *that this was a most unlikely place in which to find an Angel.* I read in the Book of Revelation of an Angel in the sun, and if you have ever watched the sun setting behind the Highland hills I am sure you must often have imagined you saw an Angel in it; but when you study the Bible, one of the first things to strike you is the unlikely places in

which we find the Angels. I read, for instance, of an Angel in the desert—can any of you tell me where that desert was? I read again of an Angel in a prison—can any of you tell me who the prisoner was? And I read here of an Angel in a grave. I want you to learn, then, *that we find Angels in the most unlikely places.* I want you to be always on the outlook for them. There are dull houses in mean streets, into which the sunshine never seems to come, and yet, sometimes there are Angels there, and some of them have the name of Mother.

The first thing we notice about this Man, for so we shall call the Angel, is that *He was young.* Now if I were to ask you how old you thought He might be, I wonder what answer you would give me? Would you say eighteen, or perhaps twenty, or perhaps twenty-five? Ah! if this was an Angel, I take it He was created with all the other Angels, and that He was alive thousands of years before this morning in the Garden. He was alive when Isaac was laid upon the

altar, He was alive when Abraham marched out to Canaan, He was alive when Adam and Eve, after their sin, went hand in hand weeping out of Paradise.

And yet these women, when they came to tell their grandchildren what they had seen in the grave that Sunday morning, never dreamed of saying they had seen an old man. What impressed them was that He was young. That means that those who live in Heaven are always young. "The oldest Angels in Heaven are the youngest." Many an old person goes to Heaven, but in Heaven there are no old persons. There is the joy, the energy, the enthusiasm of youth there for ever and for ever.

The next thing they noticed here was that this young Man was *clothed in white*. As they looked in and saw Him in the grave they remarked that He was dressed in a long white garment down to His feet. Now, of course, it was not the length of it that struck them, because all men wore long garments in those days. What

arrested them in the darkness of the grave was that the Visitor was clothed in white. And *white*, mark you, not as of linen, but the *dazzling* and *shining white* such as we read of in the case of Jesus when He was transfigured on the mountain. Now white is the garment and livery of Heaven, and this Angel, though He was coming to a grave, had not put off His raiment of the skies; He still wore it, white and beautiful, although His services took Him, as we know, to the dank and dark grave of Joseph.

Now that doesn't mean for you, boys and girls, that you are to wear your best clothes when you have some dirty bit of work to do, or some muddy bit of country to cross, but it means that wherever you go, and whatever task you may be engaged in, you are to carry with you, as this Angel did, *something of the purity and brightness of Heaven.* There are young men who, when they leave home, seem to leave all their purity behind them. There are boys and girls who are bright in strangers' company,

but they are dull and heavy in the home circle. This is one lesson that this Angel leaves for us, that wherever we be, or wherever our task may lead us, we ought ever to try to carry with us something of the radiance of the best.

Then the last thing they noted about this Man was that *He was seated.* I don't suppose He had ever been in a grave before, and you can understand how different it all was from the brightness and the glory He had left, and yet He was not hurrying up and down, nor was He anxious, nor was He afraid; He was quietly seated in the empty grave, and do you know why it was that He was so restful? It was not, I think, because He was an Angel, because I suppose Angels get frightened like the rest of us; it was not because it was the grave of Jesus, for Jesus had risen now and departed; but it was because He had been *sent by God*, because He realised He was God's servant, because He knew that the spot in which He found Himself was the very spot appointed by His

Master. That is the last lesson that I would have you learn from the Angel. *We are always safe upon the path of duty.* If we are honestly seeking to do God's will we need not weary nor let our hearts be fearful; rather we should follow the example of the Angel who, clothed in white, is perfectly at peace, simply because He understood so well that He was doing the bidding of His God.

XXII

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the Good Shepherd."—JOHN x. 14.

SINCE I was last preaching to you in this pulpit I have been having a few quiet days in the South of Scotland, in among the hills there.

You know the hills in the South of Scotland are not like the hills in the Highlands, which are rough and rugged and stony. In the South of Scotland the hills are covered right up to the top with grass. And at this season of the year, while everything is beautiful—the first flowers, the trees just coming into bud, and so on—I think far the most interesting sight is that of the sheep and the lambs, and perhaps even more interesting still, the shepherd. And to walk out on these hills any sunny day, and to watch the shepherd with his dog,

and with his leather case hung on to his back into which to put any lamb that needs to be taken home, makes one think at once of this text, "I am the Good Shepherd."

One thing that struck me was this, how these shepherds—and all of them most intelligent men—how these shepherds were not content to overlook the lambs in general, but would go to every lamb, and knew exactly where to find it. Of course, I am not talking of the little creatures who were perhaps two or three weeks old. They were able to look after themselves. I am talking rather of the lambs that were perhaps an hour old, or a day old, which is what most of them were last week. We used to watch him, he seemed to know where every lamb was to be found, and he went first to one, picked it up, looked to see that it was all right; then he went straight on to another and the same process was repeated; and all the time the dog patiently following at his heels, touching nothing.

And one could not help feeling how like that was to the Good Shepherd. He is never content to look after you in crowds, He knows each one of you perfectly, loves each one of you perfectly, and is going to take each one of you up in His arms, and if necessary keep you there, so that you may be safe. One by one the Annan shepherds went round. One by one your Good Shepherd takes loving care of you.

And then another thing, I could not see this for myself, it was one of the farmers who told me. He said, "You know, if a dog goes into one of my fields, immediately there is the greatest stir, the sheep are terrified, the lambs do not understand what is the matter, and all over the field there is alarm. But," he said, "if there is a shepherd with the dog, the sheep and the lambs just look up, and then fall to feeding again, perfectly convinced it is all right, that though the dog is a nasty, worrying creature, so long as the shepherd is there

they are perfectly safe, and if the dog and the shepherd go into a field together they just look up, and then quietly go on eating again."

My dear boys and girls, I thought that was a great lesson for us. There are a great many things whose nature it is to worry you, just as it may be a dog's nature to worry sheep. I am told you never see a dog worrying sheep, it is far too sly ever to be caught. Well, there are a great many things in our life that worry us naturally, things that make us afraid, but if you and I could just feel that, standing beside them all, is the great Good Shepherd, don't you think we would be like the sheep, and just go on doing our work with peace in our hearts, knowing that nothing harmful ever could come near us? I wish we could do that better, we are so apt to forget.

Then I spent a day or two with one of the great farmers down in that countryside, and I want to tell you what happened. He is a sheep farmer, and we

had early dinner (they always have very early meals in a farmhouse), and one could see that all the time he was not thinking of us, he was thinking of his lambs. It was a very wild day, storm, hail and snow, wild blasts of wind and rain, and no sooner was dinner over than he disappeared. We never saw him again till the sun was setting. Then he came in, drenched to the skin, battered and tattered by the storm, muddy up to his knees, and yet perfectly happy because he had got all his lambs from certain exposed fields safe into a plantation, where they could get shelter and be safe, and here were we sitting at home, comfortable and warm, in a nice snug farmhouse.

I think this makes a true comparison of our Good Shepherd, and how easily He might have stayed at home in the brightness and love and blessedness of Heaven, and instead of that, coming down on to our hillsides, braving everything, sprinkled—not with rain, but with blood—just that He might save His sheep and

His lambs. And after living in farms like that one began to feel anew what a great text this was, "I am the Good Shepherd and know My sheep, and am known of Mine."

XXIII

THE LESSON OF THE LARCHES

"Thou, therefore, endure hardness."—2 Tim. ii. 3.

I read a little paragraph in the *Glasgow Herald* the other day, and it greatly interested me because it was a paragraph about trees. I hope you all love trees; I think our Lord did, because when His great agony came He went among them, as though they were all talking to Him.

For four years, when I was a very young minister, I lived in the County of Caithness, and in that bleak, though grand and wild country, there are no trees at all; great miles of moor, with here and there an alder bush, but no great trees. The slate comes so near to the surface that the poor trees can get no hold in the ground, and when the storms come from the Pentland Firth of course they are blown down, and so

the trees have given it up for a bad job, and, like Abraham, they have all migrated to more genial counties, "Gone out, not knowing whither they were going."

When one has lived in a county like Caithness and then comes south again, it is wonderful how you love trees, and how you at once feel that something has been missing. Well now, this little paragraph I read in the *Herald* was about larch trees. I think all the boys and girls know a larch tree when they see it —one of our most beautiful pines. The paragraph said that the larch, which is a native of South and Middle Europe, is believed to have been introduced into England as early as 1629. Its introduction to Scotland in 1725 was due to Sir James Naismith of Peeblesshire, and the next to follow his example was the Duke of Atholl, with the famous larches of Dunkeld and Blair planted in 1738.

Well now, when I read that little paragraph about the Duke of Atholl I remembered a story I had heard in Perthshire, and which recently has again

been put in print, like this. Some friend of the Duke of Atholl of that date, living in Middle Europe, sent over to him twelve little larch trees, in the hope that they might grow in Scotland. They looked so delicate and fragile that the Duke of Atholl told his gardener he must take great care of them. The gardener, therefore, put them in the greenhouse, kept the temperature perfectly even, never let the Perthshire snow get near them, nor the winds from the Highlands.

But the extraordinary thing was that after a few months ten of them were dead and the other two were dying. Then the gardener asked the Duke what he was to do, and, as apparently the other two were dying, the Duke said, "Fling them out." So they flung them out on to the hillside, where the winds swept down the valley and the snow lay thick for weeks every year. Two years later the gardener, passing by, saw two beautiful little trees growing splendidly, but he had no idea what they were. He left them and they went on growing.

These were the larches that had been thrown out, and I think these very trees are growing still in Scotland!

I want you to think this morning that God is your Gardener, and a far wiser Gardener than any human one in the service, even of the Duke of Atholl. And when God refuses to coddle you, when God makes life pretty hard for you, when you have got to do your lessons, when you have got to go to bed, when boys at school tease you, when you would give worlds to get away from that bully, when you think you would be so happy if you had no lessons, and no going to bed early, and no bullying, remember God is your Gardener.

Remember, that if you were brought up in the hot-house, like the little larches, you would just die in all the big senses of dying; that God knows perfectly well you have to face hardness if you are ever to grow beautiful and strong.

The butterfly only becomes radiant and beautiful after struggling to emerge

from the chrysalis. The salmon only becomes strong and beautiful after many hard struggles upstream against currents and waterfalls. And I want you to remember about the little larches whenever you don't understand why sometimes it is such a hard thing to be a boy or a girl, and not always get your own way.

XXIV

THE ROAD OF THE LOVING HEART

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."—EPH. v. 2.

I SHOULD think that most of the boys and girls here this morning have read some books of Robert Louis Stevenson. I suppose most of the boys, and, for that part, most of the girls, have read "Treasure Island"—one of the finest books we have ever had—a book that seems to be as popular to-day as when it was first issued, for it has now been included in Everyman's Library.

Robert Louis Stevenson was one of those men who always remained a boy, and I think that is about the best kind of man there is. There is perhaps only one better kind, and that is the man who always remains a little child. Robert Louis Stevenson did not have good

health; he was very fragile and very thin, and troubled with his chest. He could not live in our climate—it takes strong people to live in our climate—and he went away to the South Seas, to the island of Samoa, and he lived there, and he died there.

You know that the natives called him "Tusitala," and that means "The Teller of Stories." Yes, but there was one other thing the natives did that I think was very beautiful. When Stevenson built his house there was not a good road to it, and the native chiefs put their heads together, and they built a road up to his house. And do you know what they called it?—I think it was a very beautiful name—they called it the "Road of the Loving Heart."

What a charming thing that was. It is all right to live in Great Western Road, or St George's Road, or London Road, but what a very beautiful thing it would be always to live in the Road of the Loving Heart! And that is just what Stevenson did.

I think that it is what our Blessed Saviour did always, and that is a very wonderful thing when you remember that our Blessed Saviour was a *Conqueror*—"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun. . . ." Now, Alexander the Great was a conqueror, Napoleon was a conqueror, but you know they did not live in the Road of the Loving Heart. Wherever they went there was death, women weeping, cottages burned, blasted fields and crops; and yet *they* were conquerors.

And now comes *Our Conqueror*, and the beautiful thing is, that right through He walked on the Road of the Loving Heart, never thinking of Himself, never asking, "Am I going to make a fortune?" never sorry because He did not. One day raising the widow's son, another day raising a little girl, the third day touching a leper—the leper would never forget it—the fourth day lifting up a man beside a pool where he had been lying for years, and so on every day along the Road of the Loving Heart, until at last,

through the little gate called the Cross, He got to the Home of the Loving Heart, which is the Home of God.

And it is along that Road He wants you to travel. I suppose there are some boys who walk on the Road of the Selfish Heart, always thinking of themselves, grumbling if they have got to go a message, or go to bed, or get up. I daresay there are some little girls constantly walking along the Road of the Vain Heart. "Do they see my new shoes?" "Are people admiring my new summer dress?" "Is not this a nice hat I have on to-day?" Do you know that one distinctive mark of everybody who is trying to keep company with Christ is, that you walk on the Road of the Loving Heart:

> Do the work that's nearest,
> Though it's dull at whiles;
> Helping when we meet them
> Lame dogs over stiles.

Lastly, a very wonderful thing is this, that the Road of the Loving Heart is

always beautiful, no matter where it leads. It may be down into the slums, it may lead into the lovely country, or far across the seas. You know what the poet Wordsworth said about the man who does his duty? The poet Wordsworth, whom I hope you will all learn to love when you grow a little older, said, if you are doing your duty,

> Flowerets laugh before thee in their beds,
> And fragrance in thy footing treads.

If that is true of the Way of *Duty*, I think it is a thousand times truer of the Way of the *Loving Heart*. I suppose that is just what our beautiful and tender text means when it says, "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us."

XXV

CAPTAIN COOK

"They that go down to the sea in ships."—Ps. cvii. 23.

This, as you all know, is the year 1928, and I have been wondering if any baby has been born this year who is going to be a famous man. I shall tell you why I have been wondering that.

In 1628 there was born a baby who grew up to be one of the greatest explorers of the soul, and you must not forget that the soul is far greater and more mysterious than the universe. In 1728, a hundred years later, was born a baby who became one of the great explorers of the world. The first of these was John Bunyan, about whom I shall talk to you some morning. The second was Captain Cook. And it is of Captain Cook I wish to speak to-day, for his name should never be forgotten.

Cook was born in Yorkshire, where his father was a farm labourer, and of course the position of the farm labourer to-day is very different from what it was then. You will not, therefore, be surprised to hear that he was born in a clay cabin. I wonder if any of you can tell me the name of somebody who, thirty-one years later, was born in an *auld clay biggin* in Ayrshire.

When he was thirteen years old he went to serve in a shop, but he was never quite at home selling ribbons and laces, and he left that to join the Merchant Service. And then, at the age of twenty-seven, he became a seaman in the British Navy. At this period he is an example to every one of you. I have seen many boys fail in life because they did not see to it that every door was open. They said, "What's the use of studying this, or passing that examination?" and then the day came when some fine post might have been theirs, but because they had not studied this, or passed that examination, the door was shut. Young Cook

set himself to have every door open. He was always at his books in leisure hours. He made himself proficient in mathematics. He mastered the difficult art of navigation. The result was, that in thirteen years he was in command of his own vessel, appropriately called *The Endeavour*.

Then began his life work. He sailed round New Zealand. He surveyed the east coast of Australia. He took possession of it in the name of Britain, and ran up the British flag there. He explored the New Hebrides, where James Paton, the missionary, afterwards laboured; he discovered many of the Pacific Islands; and in a later voyage he discovered the Sandwich Islands. You are not to think that he named them so from the kind of thing we eat at railway stations. He named them so after Lord Sandwich, who was then the First Lord of the Admiralty. There, at the age of fifty-one, and for reasons that are not clear yet, for Cook was always very tactful in his handling of the natives, he was clubbed

and stabbed to death on the seashore, and so died.

Now there are two things I want you to remember about Captain Cook, and the first is how he came to the great work of his life. The first voyage of *The Endeavour* was made not in the interests of discovery, it was made in the interests of astronomy. The ship was sent out to a place called Tahiti to observe the passing of the planet Venus over the sun. Now, I could imagine Cook grumbling at that and saying, "That is not my work. I have no interest whatever in the transit of the planet Venus." But instead of that, young Cook, with all the energy of his genius, threw himself into the duty that was given him, and helped to make the voyage a magnificent success. That is always the way to succeed in life—not to grumble at the thing given you to do and to say, "It's not for me." It's when a boy or lad puts every ounce into the thing that is given him to do to-day that the way opens to the service of his life.

The other thing we must never forget is Cook's loving care for his own men. He loved them as a father loves his children. In those days when a long voyage was undertaken the mortality among the crew was appalling. Thanks to scurvy and other fell diseases, death was always stalking in the forecastle. But Cook said to himself, "This has got to stop," and he gave such thought to the matter that in his longest voyage, which lasted for three years, he only lost a single seaman. Every sailor afloat to-day owes a deep debt, though he may never know it, to Captain Cook.

He is one of those great men of whom we may well be proud. Every boy ought to read the story of his voyages. For him we give our thanks this morning to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

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